

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3898
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2000
PM VISIT TO USA
BASUDEB ACHARIA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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- (a) whether Prime Minister's visit to the United States in September paid rich dividends;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether at the UN Millennium Summit in New York, he interacted with a number of leaders from various countries;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the way these interactions are likely to further India's interests?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) & (b) Prime Minister's visit to the United States in September, at the invitation of President Clinton, helped in consolidating the new phase of friendship and cooperation with the United States and deepening understanding between the two sides. It helped to move the relationship to a higher plane and, thus, contributed to the process of building the new relationship envisaged in the Vision Statement of March 2000. Prime Minister's interaction with the two presidential candidates and the US Congress is expected to further strengthen the broad-based and bipartisan support that exists for stronger relations with India. It would also contribute to maintaining continuity and momentum in Indo-US relations with the new Administration. The visit also enabled PM to directly address a wider audience in the United States on our vision of Indo-US relations, our economic progress, our foreign policy objectives and security concerns, including cross-border terrorism, and the developments taking place in India and in our neighbourhood. He also had the opportunity to interact with the Indian-American community, which is playing an increasingly influential role in US politics. Prime Minister also attended the UN Millennium Summit in New York, where in addition to articulating India's position on a range of international concerns, he also interacted with his counterparts from several countries.

(c) & (d) While remaining focussed on the objective of his visit to New York, which was to participate in the discussions at the Millennium Summit and articulating India's position on diverse issues, Prime Minister also met a significant number of his counterparts, including the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and Nepal, both in formal and informal interactions, on the two days that he attended the Summit.

(e) Such interactions supplement the ongoing direct efforts of the Government to strengthen India's bilateral relations with other countries.